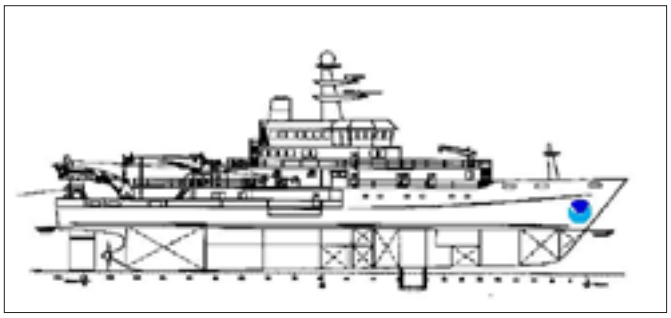
NOAA FY 2000 Budget Request Fact Sheet

YEAR OF THE OCEAN INITIATIVE

Fisheries Research Vessels

NOAA requests an increase of $51.6 million in FY 2000 for the first of four new state-of-the-art fisheries research vessels (FRVs). This will enable NOAA to take a major step toward improving the frequency and quality of stock assessments. It is very difficult to determmine how to regulate the fishing industry and successfully rebuild and sustain currently over-fished or dwindling stocks without better information about the abundance of the stock. These new vessels will be able to conduct essential stock assessment surveys, monitor fish and marine mammals species, assess ecological changes, and provide the best available data to rebuild and sustain our fisheries. These ships must be available for fisheries research missions through 2010 to meet the global challenge of maintaining sustainable ecosystems and protect the integrity of long-term research analyses. NOAA's Fisheries Research Vessel request supports a key pledge, Building Sustainable Fisheries, made by the President at the National Ocean Conference in 1998, and complements the other Year of the Ocean initiatives seeking to explore, protect and restore America's vital ocean resources.

NOAA Budget	FY 2000 Change $M
National Ocean Service (OR&F)	
Navigation Services	
(Ports for the 21st Century)	$5.2
Ocean Resources Conservation & Assessment	
(Exploring the Last Frontier)	$1.0
(Coral Reef Protection)	$2.0
National Marine Fisheries Service (OR&F)	
Conservation and Management Operations	
(Magnuson-Stevens Act)	$2.6
(Observers)	$2.0
Information Collection and Analysis	
(Fisheries Oceanography)	$1.6
(Aquaculture)	$1.0
Oceanic & Atmospheric Research (OR&F)	
Climate and Air Quality Research	
(Ocean Climate Variability)	$4.0
Oceans and Great Lakes	
(Aquaculture)	$3.6
(Fisheries Oceanography)	$0.4
(Ocean Observatories)	$3.1
Procurement, Acquisition, & Construction Account	
(Fisheries Research Vessels)	$51.6
NOAA Year of the Ocean Initiative -- Total	**$78.1**



Design drawing of the new Fisheries Research Vessel.

Why New Vessels are Needed

Since passage of the Sustainable Fisheries Act in 1996, the demand for fisheries and marine resource data has escalated exponentially, both in terms of quality and quantity. However, at the same time, NOAA's aging fleet of 15 research vessels with an average age of 32 years has largely exceeded its useful life and is technologically obsolete.

Meeting the Challenge

Replacing the aging fleet will provide research platforms capable of conducting both biological and oceanographic missions simultaneously. This allows for a rigorous, cost effective, and total ecosystem approach toward fisheries management. These vessels are acoustically quiet to meet international standards for conducting research on fisheries and protected marine resources. This is critical for reducing behavior responses of target species during surveys and minimizing interference with the hydroacoustic signals. In addition, these vessels will meet all modern safety standards and be constructed for increased endurance, thus allowing for extended research missions for as long as 40 days at sea.

As the nation's ocean agency, NOAA and NMFS scientists have developed the long-term expertise in fisheries research and management that is leading the global debate for building sustainable fisheries and managing through sound science. Investing in NOAA's fleet will be critical for meeting these challenges into the next century.

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